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ABSTRACT

This booklet outlines the components of public library collection development policies and presents a set of materials which address the civil issues surrounding the freedom of public libraries to maintain uncensored collections. An introduction which defines the function of collection development policies is followed by an outline of the basic components of such policies. Excerpts from sample policies from public libraries through the United States are then presented for each of the component areas, including intellectual framework, authority and responsibility for library material selection, selection criteria, collection maintenance, reconsideration procedures, and endorsements from professional organizations regarding intellectual freedom. A statement on the freedom to read drafted by the American Library Association (ALA) and the Association of American Publishers (AAP), a statement on the freedom to view endorsed by the Educational Film Library Association (EFLA), the ALA Library Bill of Rights, and a resolution on the freedom to read passed by the Maryland State Board of Education during 1981 are attached. (JL)

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BASIC COMPONENTS OF A PUBLIC LIBRARY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Produced by

The Maryland Library Association
Intellectual Freedom Committee
Subcommittee on Collection Development Policies

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INTRODUCTION

The Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) of the Maryland Library Association recommends that each public library in the state of Maryland prepare and adopt a formal collection development policy. To these ends and in cooperation with the Division of Library Development and Services (DLDS) of the Maryland State Department of Education, the IFC has tried to assist libraries in this task by compiling some useful information.

For the purpose of this presentation, we have differentiated between a collection development policy, often referred to as book selection policy, and an acquisition policy. The former is an official document approved by the Library Board of Trustees, which delineates and explains policies concerning the philosophy of collection development, authority for selection decision-making, criteria for acceptable materials, inclusion and exclusion of controversial materials, and maintenance of a collection through the weeding and discard process. In comparison, an acquisition policy is a very detailed listing of methods for obtaining materials in particular subject areas and/or in particular formats. It often develops from the collection development policy and is of primary importance to the professional staff of the library as it details job responsibilities.

A collection development policy is an important document because it benefits library administration, library staff, and the community. A library administration that has a policy demonstrates a committment to planning for the development of that library; in considering the issues raised by a collection development policy, administration must consider the goals and objectives of the institution. Library employees benefit by knowing how to proceed when material in the collection is challenged in any way by the public. They can provide accurate information to the public on the library's purposes and methods.

Though the collection development policy may incorporate statements that are generally understood by all concerned -- administration, staff, community -- the consequences of not having one may prove severe for the library. In the face of threats of censorship, a library without a collection development policy is in a vulnerable position. A 1981 book selection study conducted by the American Library Association and other organizations noted that libraries with formal selection policies and reconsideration procedures reported a higher rate of challenge than those without such policies. However, most often these challenges were overruled and material was not removed from the library or school.

In this booklet the IFC has outlined the components of a collection development policy. Policies from public libraries throughout the country were reviewed and portions of them excerpted to illustrate the various ways libraries address collection development issues. The excerpted portions represent a variety of approaches and should not be construed by the reader as the IFC's recommendation of one presentation over another.

BASIC COMPONENTS OF A COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

I. Intellectual Framework

Statements of philosophy, mission, goals and the community served; some libraries include the intellectual freedom statements in this section.

II. Authority and Responsibility for Selection

Who is legally responsible for selection and to whom this responsibility is delegated and/or shared.

III. Criteria for Selection

How judgments are made in materials selection and the criteria used in evaluating materials.

IV. Collection Maintenance

Policies on withdrawals, discards, replacement, and the disposition of gifts.

V. Reconsideration Procedures

The procedure for consideration of objections or complaints from the community regarding the use of, or inclusion in the collection of, particular materials.

VI. Endorsement of Statements from Professional Organizations Regarding Intellectual Freedom

Statements may include the Freedom to Read, Freedom to View, the Library Bill of Rights, and others.

EXCERPTS FROM SAMPLE COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

I. Intellectual Framework (Philosophy, Mission Statement, Goals, etc.)

A. Cedar Rapids Public Library
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Freedom of speech and freedom of the press are the rights of our heritage, guaranteed to each of us by the Constitution, and defended by our courts. Since the public library serves and is supported by many and varied groups of people and individuals, it cannot to satisfy the interests and beliefs of one group, sacrifice the interests of others.

Public opinion tends to change with time and circumstances, and librarians do not claim to be exempt from transitory currents of feeling. Therefore, they believe that majority public opinion, even when shared by themselves, is not a reliable guide for materials selection in a library with a responsibility to the future as well as the present. History shows that many books which have been most controversial or objectionable to some persons or groups have later been recognized as books which most, rather than least, belong in public libraries. If an idea is truly dangerous or evil, the best protection against it is a public which has been exposed to it, understands it, and has rejected it.

B. Fairfax County Public Library
Fairfax County, Virginia

Objective

The mission of the Fairfax County Public Library is to provide modern library resources and services necessary to meet the evolving educational, recreational, and informational needs of the public, thus enhancing individual and community life.

To support this mission, the library materials are selected, organized, and made accessible in order to anticipate and meet the diverse needs of the Fairfax County and City citizens.

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Goals of Selection

The Fairfax County Public Library selects, makes available, and promotes the use of library materials, whatever the format, which:

1. *Meet the informational needs of the community.*
2. *Meet the recreational needs of the community.*
3. *Supplement formal and informal study.*
4. *Reflect a variety of opinions (minority and majority) on a subject.*
5. *Support business, cultural, recreational, and civic activities in the community.*

6. *Stimulate self-understanding and growth.*

7. *Enhance job-related knowledge and skills.*

8. *Increase knowledge of and participation in the affirs of the community, the country, and the world.*

C. McMillan Memorial Library
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin

The Community

A knowledge of the community is a vital ingredient in the responsible selection of library materials. There must be knowledge of residents' interests, capacities and problems. The Wisconson Rapids area population encompasses a wide variety of interests, educational backgrounds, and financial abilities. The Library recognizes that the community is diverse in its makeup and its needs and endeavors to meet the community's needs within the framework of available staff and funds.

Purpose and Objectives of the McMillan Memorial Library

The McMillan Memorial Library is a public service agency and is dedicated to providing the residents of Wisconsin Rapids and South Wood County with a well-rounded collection of books and other media that record the knowledge of man, his ideas, and culture. It is also the Library's prime aim to organize said materials in a way that will permit ready access to them. The Library also makes available qualified staff to offer guidance and encouragement in use of materials and to make the Library an easily available and reliable source of information and reference.

Though the Library attempts to give the best service possible to its regular users, it also has an obligation to collect materials and search for methods of service that will satisfy the needs of those in the community who have not traditionally been library users. The library must consider not only the present needs of the community, but must anticipate the future needs in order to give timely service.

Materials should be selected and services and programs planned that satisfy residents' needs as individuals and as members of groups with concern given for all ages, backgrounds, interests, abilities, and levels of education. Staff, materials, and services should be in ample supply to allow the Library to be a dependable resource for most people most of the time.

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The Library strives to stimulate not only learning but also concern and understanding. It attempts to provide materials and guidance in their use so that as many people as possible can utilize the collective knowledge of mankind. It is vitally important that every citizen today have ready and free access to the world of ideas, information, and creative experience.

D. Oak Lawn Public Library
Oak Lawn, Illinois

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Oak Lawn Public Library is:

To assemble, preserve, and administer in organized collections, books and related educational and recreational material, in order to promote, through guidance and stimulation, the communication of ideas, an enlightened citizenship, and enriched personal lives.

To provide opportunity and encouragement for children, young people, men and women to educate themselves continuously.

E. Seattle Public Library
Seattle, Washington

The Seattle Public Library as a community institution adheres to the principle of trying to reach everyone within its service area. A fundamental part of this principle is the selection of appropriate materials, a process which depends on four factors:

1. *The objectives of the library.*

2. *The community served.*

3. *The structure of the library system.*

4. *The nature and quality of the material.*

In discussing the relationship of these factors, the purpose of this Materials Selection Policy is to define the role of the library in the community and to provide guidelines for the staff in their role as selectors.

This policy proceeds to elaborate upon each of these four factors.

F. Tucson Public Library
Tucson, Arizona

Service Statement

The Tucson Public Library provides free library service to all citizens, without question. We attempt to fill the informational, recreational, cultural, and educational needs of our users, and to encourage non-users to partake of our services. We continually try to find ways to expand our services to more people so that we can serve every possible kind of library user. In this effort, we provide materials old and new, classic and ephemeral, orthodox and unorthodox in many media, including several forms of print, video and recordings. As another medium of communication, we provide live programs in many agencies; these include lectures, demonstrations, concerts, dramatic presentations, poetry readings, workshops and discussion groups.

G. Virginia Beach Public Library
Virginia Beach, Virginia

One goal of the Virginia Beach Public Library is to guarantee to people of the community free and easy access to recorded information within the limitations of space and budget.

II. Authority and Responsibility for Collection Development

A. Fairfax County Public Library
Fairfax County, Virginia

Responsibility for the Selection of Library Materials

The authority and responsibility for the selection of library materials is delegated to the Library Director and, under his/her direction, to the professional staff who are qualified for this activity by reason of education, training, and experience.

B. Tucson Public Library
Tucson, Arizona

Authority and Responsibility for the Maintenance of Library Collections

It is a function of librarians to select and to discard library materials and to advise on their use. They are fitted for this task through training and experience. However, they must of necessity work within limitations of space and budget. And, although they try to inform themselves as well as possible, they must work within limitations of knowledge. Selection and withdrawal processes are, therefore, cooperative, and we welcome advice and suggestions from members of the community, trustees, or authorities in various fields. Librarians, however, are responsible for judging the needs of their collections and their communities, and they must make the final choices.

Final authority for the determination of the policies in this document is vested in the Library's Board of Trustees subject to approval by Mayor and Council. They have delegated this authority to the Director of the Tucson Public Library. The Director has, in turn, delegated to the Coordinators of Adult, Young Adult and Children's Services, responsibility for the authorization of titles for acquisition. Librarians in branches select the actual materials for their branches.

C. Tulsa City-County Library System
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Responsibility for Library Materials Selection

Ultimate responsibility for materials selection rests with the Director.

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Advice of specialists in the community is requested in fields in which staff members do not have sufficient expertise. Suggestions from readers are welcome and are given serious consideration within the general criteria. Final decision for purchase rests with the library.

D. Virginia Beach Public Library
Virginia Beach, Virginia

The ultimate responsibility for material selection, as for all library activities, rests with the library director.

Responsibility for the reading of children and adolescents rests with their parents and legal guardians. Library materials are not marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of the contents. No book or other item is

sequestered, except for the purpose of protecting it from injury or theft.

III. Criteria for Selection

A. Fairfax County Public Library
Fairfax County, Virginia

Criteria for Selection

The evaluation of materials is characterized by flexibility, open-mindedness, and a responsiveness to the changing needs of the citizens of Fairfax County and City. These changing needs require that materials be evaluated initially and on a continuing basis. As a result, materials, which may not have been recommended for purchase originally, may, in fact, later be purchased. The converse, that is, materials may still be considered unsuitable or unnecessary for the collection, is also possible.

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Materials are evaluated as a whole and not on the basis of a particular passage or passages. A work will not be excluded from the Library's collection because it presents an aspect of life honestly or because of frankness of expression.

While a single standard cannot be applied to each potential item for selection, materials are judged by appropriate criteria. In some instances, these criteria include artistic merit, scholarship, or the value of the material to the informational needs of the community. In other instances, the criterion may be substantial demand.

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General Criteria

1. *Availability and suitability of format.*
2. *Suitability of subject, style, and reading level for the intended audience.*
3. *Critics' and staff's reviews.*
4. *Reputation of the publisher or producer.*
5. *Quality of design and illustrations.*
6. *Relevance to community needs.*
7. *Demand for the material.*
8. *Relationship to existing materials in the collection on the same subject.*
9. *Availability and accessibility of the same material in the Metropolitan area.*

B. McMillan Memorial Library
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin

Criteria for Selection

To build collections of merit and significance, materials must be measured by objective guidelines. All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the following standards. Clearly, however, an item need not meet all of the criteria in order to be acceptable. When judging the quality of materials several standards and combinations of standards may be used, as some materials may be judged primarily on artistic merit, while others are considered because of scholarship, value as human documents, or ability to satisfy the recreational and entertainment needs of the community.

General Criteria

1. *Suitability of physical form for library use.*
2. *Insight into human and social conditions.*
3. *Suitability of subject and style for intended audience.*
4. *Present and potential relevance to community needs.*
5. *Appropriateness and effectiveness of medium to content.*
6. *Importance as a document of the times.*
7. *Relation to existing collection and other materials on subject.*
8. *Reputation and/or significance of author.*
9. *Attention given by critics, reviewers, professional book selection aids, and the public.*

IV. Collection Maintenance

A. Oak Lawn Public Library
Oak Lawn, Illinois

Withdrawal of Materials

The Oak Lawn Public Library is not a library of historical record, except in the area of local history. To ensure a vital collection of continued value to the community, books which have outlived their usefulness are withdrawn.

B. Seattle Public Library
Seattle, Washington

Discarding - Adult Books

Main Library

Book discarding is a necessary adjunct of book selection. In fact, book selection and book discarding are the two sides of the coin representing a vital, useful, well-kept collection.

It takes time, skill, care and a thorough knowledge of the books and their possible future reference value to do a competent job of discarding.

In the Seattle Public Library a careful study is made of each book before it is discarded, taking into account many different factors; obsolescence, physical condition of the book, number of copies in the library, research value, adequate coverage in the field and the availability of similar material.

Branch Discarding

The book collection of a branch library emphasizes current and popular reading rather than scholarly works and extensive reference holdings. The whole book stock is usually upon open shelves for all patrons to see. This makes their physical appearance of paramount importance.

It is also true that each branch library has a maximum book collection beyond which it should not extend.

With these two factors in mind, it then follows that branch libraries discard more freely and transfer to the main library valuable items no longer in active use. Also, if one book is withdrawn for every one added, after the maximum count is reached, this action will result in a live working collection.

Withdrawal of Materials from Library Collections

Materials are regularly discarded from library collections. They are withdrawn because they are out-of-date, so badly worn or damaged that they cannot be bound or mended, because it is chaper to replace them, or because they are once-popular materials that are no longer used. Space, the cost of replacement, and the appearance of the collection are factors in these decisions. Withdrawn materials are boxed and sent to City Stores. They are later sold at auction.

Gifts

Gifts of books and other materials are accepted with the understanding that they may be used or disposed of as the Library sees fit. New titles acquired in this manner are subject to the basic standards of selection. Replacements and duplicate copies are added to the collection if needed. The costs of processing and the availability of shelving space are also factors in determining the acceptance of gifts. The Library does not provide evaluations of gifts for tax deduction or other purposes.

C. **Virginia Beach Public Library**
Virginia Beach, Virginia

Discarding

The discarding of materials is selection in reverse. Systematic withdrawal of materials which are no longer useful in maintaining an active, accurate collection is necessary. Library Materials are discarded for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Irreparable damage.

2. *Obsolescence.*

3. *Insufficient use.*

4. *Space available for housing materials.*

Replacement

A replacement is an item purchsed to take the place of an identical title previously in the collection. It is the library's policy not to replace automatically all materials withdrawn because of loss, damage, or wear. Need for replacement in each case is judged by two factors:

1. *Existence of adequate coverage of the subject, especially if more current material is available.*

2. *Demand for the specific title.*

V. Reconsideration Procedures

A. Fairfax County Public Library
Fairfax County, Virginia

Complaints about Library Materials

The choice of library materials by users is an individual matter. While a person may reject materials for himself/herself, he/she cannot exercise censorship to restrict access to the materials by others.

Recognizing that a diversity of materials may result in some complaints, the following procedures have been developed to assure that complaints are handled in an attentive and consistent manner.

1. *The person with the complaint should be referred immediately to the Branch Manager or the person in charge in the absence of the Branch Manager. The person in charge should explain to the user that selections are made in accordance with Fairfax County Public Library's Policy for the Selection of Library Materials. If the user is not satisfied with the explanation received, he/she may ask for reconsideration in the following manner:*

   a. *A letter stating the specifics of the complaint must be written to the Branch Manager. The Branch Manager is to respond in writing to the user, advising him/her that there will be reconsideration of the item after the user's letter has been forwarded to the appropriate Materials Selection Coordinator. A copy of the FCPL Policy for the Selection of Library Materials should be included with the Branch Manager's letter.*

   b. *After receiving the original letter from the patron and a copy of the Branch Manager's letter, the Coordinator will appoint a reviewing committee of three professional staff members to reconsider the item. The reviewers will be sent copies of the two letters and any reviews available.*

   c. *The reviewers will put their recommendations in writing to the Coordinator.*

d. *The Coordinator will return the reviewers' comments to the Branch Manager along with any other reviews available.*

e. *The Branch Manager will then write to the user regarding the committee's recommended action, sending a copy of the letter to the Coordinator. The reviewers' comments are to be held confidential by all concerned. Brief quotes, however, may be used in the Branch Manager's letter to the user.*

2. *If the user desires further action, he/she may appeal to the Director of Libraries or to the Library Board of Trustees in writing.*

B. McMillan Memorial Library
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin

What to Do with a Citizen Complaint Concerning a Piece of Material in the Library

1. *The patron may be upset, so it is essential for the person receiving the complaint to remain calm, collected, and courteous.*

2. *Give Complainant a copy of the form, "Citizen's Opinion Concerning Specific Library Material," and ask him to please fill it out.*

3. *The Director should be notified of the proceedings.*

4. *Upon return of the form, an appointment should be made with sufficient time allowed for appropriate staff member and Director to review the complaint and material.*

See form on page 17.

C. Tulsa City-County Library System
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Controversial Materials

Materials representing various points of view are acquired. Works normally are not excluded because of language or explicit text or illustrations, if they meet previously stated criteria.

Citizens wishing reconsideration of library materials should complete the "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form. (See page 18.) *This form is available at all branches of the Library or may be obtained through the Director's Office. Such requests concerning adult materials are directed to the Resources Coordinator, and requests concerning juvenile materials are directed to the Children's Coordinator. If published reviews of the material in question are available, they will be sent along with the Reconsideration Request form to the Library Director.*

The Director will ask three staff members to evaluate the material in light of the patron's request, using published reviews and the above criteria. Evaluators will submit their recommendation to the Director, who will make a decision concerning the material. The process will result in maintaining the current status, a change in location or reading level, or removal.

The Director will notify the patron originating the Reconsideration Request of the decision. If the individual if not satisfied with the action taken, he may appeal to the Library Commission.

D. Virginia Beach Public Library
Virginia Beach, Virginia

Reconsideration

Once an item has been accepted as qualifying under the selection policies and rules, it will not be removed at the request of those who disagree with it unless it can be shown to be in violation of these policies and rules.

There is a formal procedure for the reconsideration of materials. (See form on page 19 .) *The Librarian is available to discuss the interpretation and application of these selection principles.*

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Material Reconsideration Procedure

When a patron complains about an item in the library collection, the senior staff member should establish the specific nature of the complaint. The staff member is encouraged to use discretion during this interview and, when appropriate, explain the material selection policy and the process of material selection followed by the library. If the patron desires to have the material formally reconsidered with respect to its place and purpose in the collection, the staff member should:

1. *Provide a copy of the material selection policy and point out the selection* (sic) *describing the reconsideration process.*

2. *Provide a Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form.*

3. *Explain that the purpose of the form is to ensure that the branch or division librarian understands precisely the nature of the request.*

4. *Give the patron the appropriate copy of the Citizen's Request and reassure the patron that the library will respond seriously and promptly to the request.*

5. *Give the completed Citizen's Request and the material in question to the branch or division librarian.*

VI. Statements from Professional Organizations

Part of every Collection Development Policy includes endorsement of the following:

FREEDOM TO READ (see p. 20)

FREEDOM TO VIEW (see p. 24)

LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS (see p. 25)

RESOLUTION 1981-32 OF THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION (see p. 26)

Where this endorsement is positioned within the policy may vary. For easy reference, however, a copy of each statement could be appended to the Collection Development Policy. Interpretive statements of the Library Bill of Rights are available from the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom, 50 E. Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611 .

CITIZEN'S OPINION CONCERNING SPECIFIC LIBRARY MATERIAL

1. Author: _____ __Hardcover __Paperback
2. Title: _____ __Film __Recording
3. Publisher (if known): _____ __Filmstrip __Art Print
4. In what section of the library is the material located?
   _____Adult _____Children's
5. How was the book brought to your attention? _____
   _____
6. Did you read, view, or listen to the entire work? _____Yes _____No
7. What is your objection to the material? Be specific; cite pages: _____
   _____
   _____
8. Is there anything positive about the material? _____
9. What, in your opinion, is the theme of the material? _____
   _____
10. Do you know what literary critics and reviewers think of this material?
    _____Yes _____No
11. What do you feel might be the result of reading this book? _____
    _____
12. For what age group would you recommend this material? _____
13. In its place, what material would you recommend that would convey a valuable picture and perspective of the subject treated: _____
    _____
14. What would you like your library to do about this material:
    _____Do not lend it to my child
    _____Withdraw it from the library
    _____Return it to the library staff for re-evaluation
    _____Other (specify) _____

Signed _____ Print or type name _____

Phone Number _____ Address _____

Organization or Group Represented If Any _____

Tulsa City-County Library System
Tulsa, OKLAHOMA

Agency_____

Date_____

CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF A BOOK

Dear Library User:

We appreciate your concern. We will forward this form to a committee selected by the Director for the re-evaluation of books in the library. You will be notified after the committee and the Director of the library have reached their decision.

AUTHOR_____

TITLE_____

NAME_____ TELEPHONE_____

ADDRESS_____ CITY_____ ZIP_____

PATRON REPRESENTS:_____ HIMSELF _____ ORGANIZATION

1. To what do you object? (Please be specific; cite pages, etc.)_____

_____

_____

2. Did you read the entire book? ☐ Yes ☐ No. If not, what parts did you read? _____

3. Would you recommend this book for a different age group? _____

4. What do you feel might be the result of reading this book? _____

_____

_____

5. COMMENTS: Please give your reasons for requesting that this book be reconsidered for the library collection. We appreciate any help that you can give us for committee evaluation.

VIRGINIA BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARY

CITIZEN'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

_____
Your Name

_____
Address Zip Telephone

Whom do you represent: ___ Myself

___ Organization (Please Specify) _____

___ Other (Please Specify) _____

Author _____

Title _____

Form of material (e.g., book, sound recording, etc.) _____

Did you read, see, listen to or otherwise use the material in its entirety? _____,

If not, then which parts? _____

_____

Have you seen or heard reviews of this material? _____

If yes, please name source _____

What do you think the material is about? _____

_____

Please state your comment, suggestion or criticism of the material as specifically as possible (use additional sheets if necessary).

_____

_____

_____

What would you like your library to do about this material? _____

_____

_____

_____ _____
Your Signature Date

The library appreciates your interest. Your comments will be forwarded to the Library Director, who will respond to you by letter.

THE FREEDOM TO READ

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label "controversial" books, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to the use of books and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating them, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy : that the ordinary citizen, by exercising his critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow-citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda, and to reject it. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts of suppression. We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio and television. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology, the expression of a dissident idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against it as against a hostile deed, with suppression.

And yet suppresion is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solucions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with stress.

Now as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. They are essential to the extended discussion which serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures towardsconformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free men will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. IT IS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST FOR PUBLISHERS AND LIBRARIANS TO MAKE AVAILABLE THE WIDEST DIVERSITY OF VIEWS AND EXPRESSIONS, INCLUDING THOSE WHICH ARE UNORTHODOX OR UNPOPULAR WITH THE MAJORITY.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until his idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept which challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freeom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant of activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. PUBLISHERS, LIBRARIANS AND BOOKSELLERS DO NOT NEED TO ENDORSE EVERY IDEA OR PRESENTATION CONTAINED IN THE BOOKS THEY MAKE AVAILABLE. IT WOULD CONFLICT WITH THE PUBLIC INTEREST FOR THEM TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN POLITICAL, MORAL OR AESTHETIC VIEWS AS A STANDARD FOR DETERMINING WHAT BOOKS SHOULD BE PUBLISHED OR CIRCULATED.

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one man can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. IT IS CONTRARY TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST FOR PUBLISHERS OR LIBRARIANS TO DETERMINE THE ACCEPTABILITY OF A BOOK ON THE BASIS OF THE PERSONAL HISTORY OR POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS OF THE AUTHOR.

A book should be judged as a book. No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free men can flourish which draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. THERE IS NO PLACE IN OUR SOCIETY FOR EFFORTS TO COERCE THE TASTE OF OTHERS, TO CONFINE ADULTS TO THE READING MATTER DEEMED SUITABLE FOR ADOLESCENTS, OR TO INHIBIT THE EFFORTS OF WRITERS TO ACHIEVE ARTISTIC EXPRESSION.

To some,much of modern literature is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the

the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters taste differs, and taste cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised which will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. IT IS NOT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST TO FORCE A READER TO ACCEPT WITH ANY BOOK THE PREJUDGMENT OF A LABEL CHARACTERIZING THE BOOK OR AUTHOR AS SUBVERSIVE OR DANGEROUS.

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. It presupposes that each individual must be directed in making up his mind about the ideas he examines. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PUBLISHERS AND LIBRARIANS, AS GUARDIANS OF THE PEOPLE'S FREEDOM TO READ, TO CONTEST ENCROACHMENTS UPON THAT FREEDOM BY INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS SEEKING TO IMPOSE THEIR OWN STANDARDS OR TASTES UPON THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.

It is inevitable inthe give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society each individual is free to determine for himself what he wishes to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive.

7. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PUBLISHERS AND LIBRARIANS TO GIVE FULL MEANING TO THE FREEDOM TO READ BY PROVIDING BOOKS THAT ENRICH THE QUALITY AND DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION. BY THE EXERCISE OF THIS AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSIBILITY, BOOKMEN CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT THE ANSWER TO A BAD BOOK IS A GOOD ONE, THE ANSWER TO A BAD IDEA IS A GOOD ONE.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when expended on the trivial; it is frustrated when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for his purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of their freedom and integrity, and the enlargement of their service to society, requires of all bookmen the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens the fullest of their support.

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We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of books. We do so because we believe that they are good, possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

A Joint Statement by:

American Library Association
Association of American Publishers

Subsequently Endorsed by:

American Booksellers Association
American Civil Liberties Union
American Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO
Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai B'rith
Association of American University Presses
Bureau of Independent Publishers & Distributors
Children's Book Council
Freedom of Information Center
Freedom to Read Foundation
Magazine Publishers Association
Motion Picture Associaton of America
National Association of College Stores
National Book Committee
National Council of Negro Women
National Council of Teachers of English
National Library Week Program
National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association of the U.S.A.
P.E.N.- American Center
Periodical and Book Association of America
Sex Informaton & Education Council of the U.S.
Women's National Book Association

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Copies of this statement are available - at 10¢ each postpaid - from the American Library Association, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611 and the Association of American Publishers, Inc., 1 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016. Bulk rates for 25 copies and up furnished on request.

FREEDOM TO VIEW

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore, we affirm these principles:

1. It it in the public interest to provide the broadest possible access to films and other audiovisual materials because they have proven to be among the most effective means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.

2. It is in the public interest to provide for our audiences, films and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.

3. It is our professional responsibility to resist the constraint of labeling or pre-judging a film on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.

4. It is our professional responsibility to contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Educational Film Library Association's Freedom to View Committee, and was adopted by the EFLA Board of Directors in February, 1979. Libraries and educational institutions are encouraged to adopt this statement and display it in their catalogs or libraries. The text of the statement may be reprinted freely; permission is granted to all educational institutions to use it.

EDUCATIONAL FILM LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, 43 W. 61 St., New York, NY 10023

This statement was adopted by the Board of Directors of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology on 1 December 1979. It was also endorsed by the American Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee and the ALA Council in June 1979. The Maryland Library Association's Executive Board adopted this statement in March, 1980.

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948.
Amended February 2, 1961, June 27, 1967, and January 23, 1980,
by the ALA Council.

Resolution 1981-32 of the
MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

WHEREAS, The freedom to read is essential to our democracy; and

WHEREAS, Public libraries have a responsibility to make available to the public books and other material offering the widest diversity of knowledge and ideas, views and expressions, so that citizens may choose freely from among a broad range of conflicting ideas; and

WHEREAS, It is in the public interest for libraries to reaffirm this principle in policies and procedures for the selection of library materials and for dealing with complaints and requests for the removal of material by individuals or groups; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education endorses the Freedom to Read principle and requires boards of library trustees of each public library system to adopt policies that will affirm and guide the effective implementation of this principle and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Board directs the Assistant State Superintendent for Libraries to provide assistance to libraries and to report the result to the Board by June, 1982.

Adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education, 24 June 1981

Collection Development Policies Cited:

1. Cedar Rapids Public Library
   Cedar Rapids, Iowa

2. Fairfax County Public Library
   Fairfax County, Virginia

3. McMillan Memorial Library
   Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin

4. Oak Lawn Public Library
   Oak Lawn, Illinois

5. Seattle Public Library
   Seattle, Washington

6. Tucson Public Library
   Tucson, Arizona

7. Tulsa City-County Library System
   Tulsa, Oklahoma

8. Virginia Beach Public Library
   Virginia Beach, Virginia

FURTHER READING

The sources below may be in your public library. If not, they shoould be available via inter-library loan:

Background Readings in Building Library Collections, ed. by Phyllis Van Orden and Edith B. Phillips. 2nd ed. Scarecrow, 1979. See the following:

"Book selection and intellectual freedom," by Leroy Charles Merritt, pp. 19-28.

"Defending the indefensible : the limits of intellectual freedom," by Leo N. Flanagan, pp. 29-38.

"The trustee and intellectual freedom," by Jane Cameron, pp. 83-85.

Other readings deal with the theory of collection development, selection policies, the selection process, etc.

Building Library Collections, by Wallace J. Bonk and Rose Mary Magrill. 5th ed. Scarecrow, 1979. See:

"Censorship and selection," Chapter 7, pp. 257-279.

Defending Intellectual Freedom, the Library and the Censor, by Eli M. Oboler. Greenwood, 1980.

A collection of essays which show how libraries can combat the censor and fulfill their responsibility to the reading public.

The Library Trustee, a Practical Guidebook, ed. by Virginia G. Young. 3rd ed., Bowker, 1978. See:

"The trustee and intellectual fredom," by A.P.Allain and J.F.Krug, pp. 126-129.